

Delaware Increases Early Childhood Providers Offering Quality-Rated Child Care Programs

Governor Jack Markell and Lt. Governor Matt Denn Celebrate Early Childhood Providers in *Delaware Stars for Early Success*

Wilmington, DE – The number of early childhood providers offering programming at the highest levels of quality in Delaware has more than doubled over the past year – an achievement Governor Jack Markell and Lt. Governor Matt Denn celebrated today at an event recognizing early childhood providers enrolled in [Delaware Stars for Early Success](#). Delaware Stars for Early Success is a quality rating and improvement system designed to help early childhood providers meet increasingly higher levels of quality in their programming. Over time, programs earn more Stars as they make improvements. Over 350 programs and supporters of early childhood initiatives joined in the celebration to recognize the programs that have chosen to participate in Stars, and the ones that have attained higher Star levels in 2012.



“One of the most important investments we can make is in our state’s youngest children,” said Governor Jack Markell. “Our vision is to create a world-class early childhood system where quality programs prepare all of our children for success in a very competitive world. Early childhood development is

economic development. Our children's futures and our state's economic future depend on it."

"Working with young children in early childhood classrooms is tough, but it is some of the most important work going on here in our state," said Lt. Governor Matt Denn. "I want to recognize the committed, compassionate, and skilled people working with our kids every day. Their work is important. Their work changes lives. And everyone here today is behind them."

Programs make progress in Stars by attaining increasingly higher standards across four domains of quality: Learning Environment and Curriculum, Professional Development, Family Engagement and Management and Administration. The state and the Delaware Institute for Excellence in Early Childhood at the University of Delaware are supporting programs as they work to improve their quality—through technical assistance, training and professional development opportunities, and financial supports in the form of grants and awards.

[See list of participating Delaware Stars for Early Success Program Participants](#)



"This event is a wonderful opportunity for us to recognize excellence in our Early Learning providers. The overwhelming show of support here today encourages us to push forward and continue with the challenging yet exciting work that will directly benefit

Delaware's children," said Vivian Rapposelli, Secretary for the Department of Services for Children, Youth and Their Families.

"Stars wouldn't be possible without the dedicated team of deeply talented individuals who make it run. We are grateful

to them, and to the many community partners from the private and non-profit sectors who have been involved from the beginning,” said Michelle Taylor, President of United Way of Delaware, an early architect and funder and continuous supporter of the Stars program.

Delaware has committed to improve both access to and the quality of early childhood programs. The Markell Administration, with the support of the Delaware General Assembly, made the decision in 2011 to invest \$22M in early childhood education. [Later that year, the state won an additional \\$50M in the federal *Early Learning Challenge* grant competition.](#) The state proposes to use those *Early Learning Challenge* funds to significantly increase the numbers of early childhood programs participating in and attaining the highest levels of quality in Delaware Stars. **It further intends intends to grow the percentage of low-income children who participate in a quality-rated early childhood program from 20% to 80% by 2015.** The state has made clear progress toward these goals this year. **The number of programs participating in Stars and attaining the highest Star Levels of 3, 4 and 5 have both doubled in 2012.**



Shannon Rudisill, Director, Office of Child Care, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services travelled from Washington, D.C. to attend the event today and congratulate area providers. She discussed the unique state commitment, leadership and collaboration within the community, business and non-profit supporters that distinguishes Delaware and encouraged further progress over the next four years.

"We look forward to seeing you all back here next year when you've earned your next Star," said Lt. Governor Denn.
"Congratulations, well done, and keep up the good work!"